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### TEACHING POSITIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

THE secretary of the National Education Association reports that more than 100,000 teaching positions in the public schools of the United States are either vacant or filled by teachers below standard, and the attendance at normal schools and teacher-training schools has decreased 20 per cent. in the last three years.

Letters were sent out by the association in September to every county and district superintendent in the United States asking for certain definite information. Signed statements were sent in by more than 1,700 superintendents, from every state, representing 238,173 teaching positions. These report an actual shortage of 14,681 teachers, or slightly more than 6 per cent. of the teaching positions represented, and 23,006 teachers below standard who have been accepted to fill vacancies, or slightly less than 10 per cent. It is estimated that there are 650,000 teaching positions in the public schools of the United States, and if these figures hold good for the entire country there are 39,000 vacancies and 65,000 teachers below standard.

These same superintendents report that 52,798 teachers dropped out during the past year, a loss of over 22 per cent. On this basis the total number for the entire country would be 143,000. The reports show that the shortage of teachers and the number of teachers below standard are greatest in the rural districts where salaries are lowest and teaching conditions least attractive.

The states in which salaries and standards are highest have the most nearly adequate supply of teachers. California shows a combined shortage and below standard of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; Massachusetts shows  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and Illinois 7 per cent. In at least six of the southern states more than one third of their schools are

reported either without teachers or being taught by teachers below their standards. Nearly all of the superintendents declare that teachers' salaries have not increased in proportion to the increased cost of living, nor as salaries have increased in other vocations, and that teachers are continuing to leave the profession for other work.

Reports received by the National Education Association from normal school presidents show that the attendance in these teacher-training institutions has fallen off alarmingly. The total attendance in 78 normal schools and teacher-training schools located in 35 different states for the year 1916, was 33,051. In 1919 the attendance in these same schools had fallen to 26,134. The total number of graduates in these schools in 1916 was 10,295, and in 1919, 8,274. The total number in the graduating classes of 1920 in these 78 schools is 7,119. These figures show a decrease of over 30 per cent. in four years in the finished product of these schools.

### SCIENTIFIC ITEMS

WE record with regret the death of Dr. Elmer Ernest Southard, professor of neuropathology in Harvard university; of Dr. Christian R. Holmes, dean of the college of medicine, University of Cincinnati; of Rear Admiral John Elliott Pillsbury, U. S. N., retired, president of the National Geographical Society.

DR. BURTON E. LIVINGSTON has been elected permanent secretary of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, to succeed Dr. L. O. Howard, elected president of the association. Dr. Livingston will retain the professorship of plant physiology at the Johns Hopkins University, and the office of the association will remain at the Smithsonian Institution.